

Minutes of the Meeting of
The Commission of Fine Arts
m 8 September 1955

The Commission met pursuant to notice at 9:30 a.m., with David E. Finley, Chairman, presiding

Present were: David E. Finley, Chairman Elbert Peets
 Felix de Weldon Mrs. Emily Muir
 Douglas W. Orr Wm. G. Perry

L.R. Wilson, Secretary
Gilbert Halasz, Stenotypist

Constitution Avenue Bridge - status

The members reviewed the material presented by the District Highway Department and reiterated the fact that the network of roadways and overpasses indicated on the Washington approaches to the bridge were still completely unacceptable to the Commission of Fine Arts. They further stated that they were responsive to the idea of constructing retaining walls across South Island to retain a large fill for the bridge abutment at that point and give the effect of a large bridge and a smaller bridge meeting on the island. The trees of the island would screen the retaining wall to a great extent. While they did not expect a monumental bridge such as the Memorial Bridge, the members emphasized the necessity of having a well designed bridge, with handsome relationship of spans and masonry supports.

Review of Southwest Area B. Redevelopment Plans

The members reviewed the plans for the Southwest Area B. previous to their presentation informally by representatives of the Redevelopment Land Agency later in the day. The members felt that the proposed plans were monotonous and poorly designed and that there was a lack of coordination between the plans and other areas of the city. Opposition was expressed to the proposed wholesale demolition of all structures in the area and the members of the Commission decided to recommend that it would be far wiser to leave standing the many existing buildings which were in good condition and soundly constructed. Further discussion was withheld until the meeting with the representatives of the Redevelopment Land Agency later in the day.

Shipstead-Luce Preliminary Submission -design for proposed
Ballentine's Book Store at 607 15th Street, Northwest

Mr. Weihe, the architect, presented preliminary designs for a proposed book store at 607 15th Street, facing the Treasury Building. The members considered that the design for the proposed building was unsuited to its location and they objected particularly to the use of white marble and to the plans for a very large sign. The architect was requested to make a restudy for submission at the next meeting of the Commission in October.

Georgetown Architectural Submission Referred to the Commission of Fine Arts. Proposed Contemporary design for office building at Canal Road and 37th Street, Northwest

The members reviewed designs for a proposed office building at Canal Road and 37th Street, N. W. The architects were Messrs. Diegert and Yerkes. The members of the Commission of Fine Arts agreed with the members of the Georgetown Panel, in the opinion that the design was wholly contemporary in character and, however interesting it might be in that respect, in no way did it conform to the traditional architectural expression set forth in Public Law 808. They further stated that while it was recognized that a certain amount of leniency is necessary in dealing with special circumstances incident to projects in some locations of the "Old Georgetown Area", approval of the design submitted for this project would create an undesirable and unwarranted precedent which could readily cause difficulty in dealing with future cases. Exhibit A.

District of Columbia Government - Proposed Youth Center
District of Columbia Department of Correction, Lorton, Va.

The members of the Commission met with Mr. Merrel A. Coe, District of Columbia Supervising Architect, and Mr. Mills and Mr. Petticord, architects, to discuss preliminary drawings for the proposed Youth Correction Center near Lorton, Virginia.

The members were impressed by the architect's success in avoiding a prison-like appearance in the buildings. They thought the entrance to the V-shaped dormitory buildings were pleasantly and imaginatively designed; the construction was light, open and colorful, such as might be used at the entrance to a recreation hall of a summer camp. This was felt to be a conspicuous advance on previous efforts. The members also felt that the site plan was fundamentally sound and that the designer had successfully met the difficulties presented by the necessity of placing buildings of very extended ground plan on an irregular terrain. It was hoped that the finished plans would be presented to the Commission of Fine Arts whenever they were completed. Exhibit B.

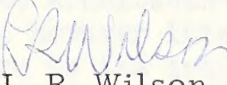
District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency

Mr. John R. Searles, Jr., Executive Director of the Redevelopment Land Agency reviewed for the members, the organization and policies of the urban renewal organization. In particular, Mr. Searles wished the Commission to choose between three plans for the rebuilding of Area B of Southwest Washington. The members of the Commission, however, felt that the diagrammatic site plans and models, as presented, did not constitute sufficient material for a recommendation concerning the choice of a developer. They stated that in order to make a choice between the schemes they would need more detailed site and architectural plans, as well as an overall architectural and town planning program, directed toward the substantially harmonious development of the entire Southwest area, by which the suitability of a sectional plan could be

judged. As a minimum control measure, the members believed that all of Delaware Avenue, within the area to be developed, should be planned by one designer or cooperatively, so that it would tend to unify the area through which it runs.

During the forty-five years of its existence, the Commission of Fine Arts has always tried to foster and preserve the principles of the development of the city of Washington that are inherent in the L'Enfant Plan and the McMillan Plan and it was, therefore, hoped that due consideration of an architect's ability to realize these standards would be given by the Redevelopment Land Agency before putting the responsibility for development of areas of the city into the hands of developers and architects. The members stressed their willingness to cooperate further with the Redevelopment Land Agency on these matters.

At 12:45 p.m. the meeting recessed and the members departed for an inspection of the Southwest Redevelopment Area.


L. R. Wilson
Secretary

137061

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANTS FOR GEORGETOWN, PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 6 SEPTEMBER 1955 FOR PRESENTATION TO THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS DURING THE MEETING ON 7 - 8 SEPTEMBER 1955

SUBJECT: Sketches for a building designed by Messrs. Diegert and Yerkes, Architects, for their own offices.

LOCATION PROPOSED: 37th Street Extended, South of Prospect Avenue.

1. The site is within the boundaries of the district created by Public Law 808, 81st Congress, and known as "Old Georgetown."
2. The character of the general neighborhood immediately adjoining, and north of the site is residential. The existing houses along the north side of Prospect Avenue, and the east side of 37th Street are definitely in conformity with the architectural expression set up in Public Law 808.
3. According to the sketches submitted for the Architects' offices, the design is wholly contemporary in character and, however interesting it may be in that respect, in no way does it conform to the traditional architectural expression set forth in the governing law.
4. The architects apparently seek to justify the design's lack of conformity to the law, by calling attention to the fact that the ground of the proposed site slopes at such a sharp angle southward, that the building would not be "subject to public view from a public highway" except from Canal Road (which is zoned first commercial at that point), and 37th Street extended. The latter is at present undeveloped, and covered with a heavy growth and thick underbrush. The future development of Canal Road as well as 37th Street extended, would seem to be worthy of consideration.

While it is recognized that a certain amount of leniency is necessary in dealing with the special circumstances incident to projects in some locations of the "Old Georgetown" area, it is nevertheless the opinion of this Board that an approval of the design submitted for the project in question would create an undesirable and unwarranted precedent that could readily cause difficulty in dealing with future cases.

The Board of Architectural Consultants for Georgetown unanimously recommends that the design under consideration be disapproved.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANTS FOR GEORGETOWN, PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 6 SEPTEMBER 1955 FOR PRESENTATION TO THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS DURING THE MEETING ON 7 - 8 SEPTEMBER 1955

SUBJECT: Sketches for a building designed by Messrs. Dieger and Yerkes, Architects, for their own offices.

LOCATION PROPOSED: 37th Street Extended, South of Prospect Avenue.

1. The site is within the boundaries of the district created by Public Law 808, 81st Congress, and known as "Old Georgetown."
2. The character of the general neighborhood immediately adjoining and north of the site is residential. The existing houses along the north side of Prospect Avenue, and the east side of 37th Street are definitely in conformity with the architectural expression set up in Public Law 808.
3. According to the sketches submitted for the Architects' offices, the design is wholly contemporary in character and, however interesting it may be in that respect, in no way does it conform to the traditional architectural expression set forth in the governing law.
4. The architects apparently seek to justify the design's lack of conformity to the law, by calling attention to the fact that the ground of the proposed site slopes at such a sharp angle southward, that the building would not be "subject to public view from a public highway" except from Canal Road (which is zoned first commercial at that point), and 37th Street extended. The latter is at present undeveloped, and covered with a heavy growth and thick underbrush. The future development of Canal Road as well as 37th Street extended, would seem to be worthy of consideration.

While it is recognized that a certain amount of leniency is necessary in dealing with the special circumstances incident to projects in some locations of the "Old Georgetown" area, it is nevertheless the opinion of this Board that an approval of the design submitted for the project in question would create an undesirable and unwarranted precedent that could readily cause difficulty in dealing with future cases.

The Board of Architectural Consultants for Georgetown unanimously recommends that the design under consideration be disapproved.

13 September 1955

Mr. Merrel A. Coe
D. C. Supervising Architect
3146 District Building
300 Indiana Avenue, N. W.
Washington 1, D. C.

Dear Mr. Coe:

The members of the Commission of Fine Arts were happy to have you and Mr. Mills and Mr. Petticord meet with them on 8 September 1955 and to have Mr. Mills present his firm's preliminary drawings for the proposed Youth Correctional Center, near Lorton, Virginia.

We were particularly impressed by the architects' success in avoiding a prison-like appearance in the buildings. The entrances to the V-shaped dormitory buildings are pleasantly and imaginatively designed; the construction is light, open, and colorful, such as might be used at the entrance to the recreation hall of a summer camp. This is a conspicuous advance on previous efforts to avoid a prison-look which have usually been in the direction of making each entrance look like the doorway of a small brick cottage. We have no doubt that the aesthetic expression of the new Youth Center will have a favorable effect on the morale of the inmates.

The site plan appears fundamentally sound. The designer has met successfully the difficulties presented by the necessity of placing buildings of very extended ground plan on a very irregular terrain. We will look forward to seeing the finished plans when they are ready.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

EXHIBIT B

14 September 1955

Mr. John R. Searles, Executive Director
Redevelopment Land Agency
499 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W.
Washington 1, D. C.

Dear Mr. Searles:

At our meeting on 8 September 1955, the members of the Commission were very glad to have your interesting account of the work the Redevelopment Land Agency is doing in Southwest Washington.

Regarding the three plans for the rebuilding of Area B, we feel that the diagrammatic site plans and models, as presented to us, do not constitute sufficient material for a recommendation concerning the choice of a developer.

In order to make a choice between the schemes we would need more detailed site and architectural plans. It would also be desirable to have an overall architectural and town planning program, directed toward the substantially harmonious development of the entire Southwest area, by which the suitability of a sectional plan could be judged. As a minimum control measure we believe that all of Delaware Avenue, within the area to be developed, should be planned by one designer or cooperatively, so that it will tend to unify the area through which it runs.

We are confident that your Agency will find among the three proposers a builder-architect team that will take a broad view of this operation and by their enthusiasm and prestige will accomplish the cooperation that is needed to make it a credit to Washington.

During the forty-five years of its existence, the Commission of Fine Arts has always tried to foster and preserve the principles for the development of the City of Washington that are inherent in the L'Enfant Plan of 1791 and the McMillan Plan of 1901. The Commission therefore hopes that due consideration of an architect's ability to realize these standards will be given by your Agency before putting the responsibility for redevelopment of areas of the city into the hands of developers and architects for the programs that fall under your jurisdiction. The Commission of Fine Arts will be happy to cooperate with you further on these matters.

Sincerely yours,

L.R. Wilson
Secretary

Index to Minutes of Meeting
5 October 1955

American Battle Monuments Commission	
U.S. Marine Monument-Belleau Wood	4
Appropriations for Commission, Increased	1
Continental Hotel-one story addition-SL 1792	3
Constitution Avenue Bridge	
Appointment of Mr. Orr and Mr. Peets to work with National Capital Planning Commission	2
Status of Bridge	1
Federal Triangle-Great Plaza - elimination of parking	3
First Infantry Division Memorial, addition to	3
Second Infantry Division Memorial-World War II	3
Shipstead-Luce Act, Panel of Consultants	2
Southwest Area C Proposal - Redevelopment	4
Taft Memorial, Robert A.	1

Minutes of the meeting of
The Commission of Fine Arts
Washington, D.C.
5 October 1955

The Commission met pursuant to notice at 9:30 a.m., with Mr. David E. Finley, Chairman, presiding.

Present were: David E. Finley
 Elbert Peets
 Felix de Weldon
 Mrs. William Muir
 Douglas W. Orr
 William G. Perry

L.R. Wilson, Secretary

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the meeting in March 1955 were approved.

Dates for next two meetings.

The dates of 9 November 1955 and 8 December 1955 were confirmed as the dates for the next two meetings of the Commission.

Increased Appropriations for the Commission.

The members discussed the need for a larger appropriation in order to increase the grades of the present staff members and possibly to employ an Administrative Assistant and Technical Assistant. It was noted that the current limit of authorization would not allow for adjustment of salaries. The Chairman and the Secretary were authorized to take the necessary steps. Exhibit A.

Taft Memorial-United States Capitol Grounds

The drawings for the carillon tower, which the Physical Memorial Subcommittee of the Robert A. Taft Memorial Foundation, had commissioned Mr. Douglas Orr to design, were presented by the architect for the consideration of the Commission of Fine Arts. He explained that the Subcommittee was firm in its desire for a carillon tower, but that a fountain had been designed at the base in accordance with the suggestion of the Commission of Fine Arts. The members of the Commission were favorably impressed with the design and a letter was sent to the Chairman of the Physical Subcommittee stating their views. Exhibit B.

Constitution Avenue Bridge-Status

The Chairman read a letter from Mr. Hermann Hagedorn, Director of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, expressing approval of the letter written by the Commission after the September meeting to the

Director of the Department of Highways and Traffic regarding the design of the projected Constitution Avenue-Theodore Roosevelt Island Bridge. The Chairman also read the draft of a letter to Mr. Hagedorn expressing the Commission's appreciation for the offer of the Theodore Roosevelt Association to permit the proposed Constitution Avenue bridge to cross the lower end of the Theodore Roosevelt Island in order to preserve the immediate setting of the Lincoln Memorial.

The members adopted a resolution commending the Theodore Roosevelt Association for its action, and asked the Chairman to include it into a letter.

Also read and approved was the draft of a letter to Brigadier General Thomas A. Lane, Engineer Commissioner for the District of Columbia giving the Commission's suggestions for a new approach to the problem which would protect the Lincoln Memorial from the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge traffic. Exhibits, C, C-1, C-2, C-3, and C-4.

Appointment of Representatives of Commission of Fine Arts to work with the National Capital Planning Commission on Constitution Avenue Bridge matters.

The members agreed that it would be advisable to have closer professional cooperation between the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission during the development of plans for the proposed Constitution Avenue Bridge. The Chairman accordingly asked Mr. Orr and Mr. Peets to continue to work closely with the Planning Commission, with the understanding that such cooperation should extend only to discussions in which the views of the Commission of Fine Arts would be expressed, but would not involve participation in any decisions with the Planning Commission. On this basis, it was voted to approve the recommendation.

Panel of Consultants to assist in administering the Shipstead-Luce Act.

The advisability of the Commission's appointing a three-member panel of architects which would meet at the call of the Secretary, and make recommendations on submissions under the Shipstead-Luce Act, was carefully considered. Although the advantages to be gained were evident, some of the members were reluctant to make use of such a panel, because they felt that the Shipstead-Luce Act specifically charged the members of the Commission of Fine Arts with the responsibility for giving advice on the Shipstead-Luce submissions, and did not give the Commission the authority to delegate such responsibility to a Board. It was voted to take no action at this time.

Elimination of Parking Lot in the Great Plaza, Federal Triangle.

The members discussed the deplorable and unsightly condition arising from the parking lot in the Great Plaza. After deciding to make their views known, they approved the draft of a resolution calling upon the General Services Administration to take steps to abolish it and to make the space in the Great Plaza available to the National Park Service for development as a park.

The Chairman also read the draft of a letter addressed to Mr. Edmund F. Mansure, Administrator of General Services, requesting that he take steps to carry out the Commission's recommendations. Copy of letter to Mr. Mansure containing the resolution is attached as Exhibit D.

Continental Hotel-one story addition (SL #1792).

The Secretary showed the members drawings which had been submitted for a one story addition to be erected for use as a ballroom at the Continental Hotel, facing the Capitol Grounds near Union Station, at the intersection of North Capital Street and Louisiana Avenue, N. W. After studying the plans, the members voted the approval of the designs for the one story limestone addition as submitted.

Second Infantry Division Memorial-addition to

Mr. Ralph O. Lundgren, Chairman of the Memorial Committee, Second Infantry Division Association, presented preliminary plans for commemorating the action of the Second Infantry Division in World War II and the Korean Conflict. Mr. Lundgren said that funds for the memorial had not yet been raised, but his Committee wanted to determine the position of the Commission regarding an addition, which would harmonize with the existing Second Division Monument on the Ellipse, facing Constitution Avenue, Northwest. The members considered that the plans would need further study and recommended that Mr. Lundgren get in touch with Mr. Otto Eggers, successor to Mr. John Russell Pope, the architect of the original Second Division Monument. They told Mr. Lundgren they would be glad to confer with him and Mr. Eggers as the plans developed. See Exhibit E.

First Infantry Division Monument -addition to

Colonel William E. Shepherd, Agent of the Society of the First Division, and Mr. Cass Gilbert, architect, presented plans for commemorating the participation of the First Infantry Division in World War II and the Korean Conflict, by means of an appropriate addition to the existing monument of the First Division, located on E Street, N. W., south of the Old State, War and Navy Building.

Colonel Shepherd pointed out that, to comply with the recommendations made at a previous meeting by the Commission of Fine Arts, the cost would be in the neighborhood of \$100,000, whereas they had only about \$60,000 to spend. The members said that they recognized that the problem of designing an addition, that would maintain the dignity and monumentality of the original monument was most difficult. They expressed

the hope that further study would show a way. Colonel Shepherd and Mr. Gilbert finally agreed that further study might enable them to carry out the suggestions made by the Commission. Exhibit F.

American Battle Monuments Commission

United States Marine Monument-Belleau Wood, France

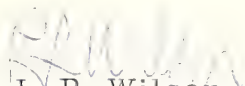
Mr. de Weldon, the sculptor member of the Commission, showed the members a photograph of a bronze bas-relief, portraying a United States Marine attacking with a bayonet. Mr. de Weldon explained that the bas-relief was to be the main feature of a granite shaft at Belleau Wood, France, in commemoration of the United States Marines who gave their lives in that battle of World War I. Mr. de Weldon asked special consideration of the design because the date of dedication was November 11. The design was approved as submitted. Exhibit G.

Redevelopment Land Agency -Area C Proposal

Mr. Malcolm A. Burrows, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Land Agency met with the Commission and outlined the progress of the plans for the redevelopment of Project Area C in the southwest redevelopment area. Mr. Burrows was accompanied by Mr. William L. Slayton, Vice President of Webb and Knapp, and Mr. I. M. Pei, Chief Architect of Webb and Knapp, and Mr. Harry Wesse, Architect. The extent of the problem was discussed generally and the members of the Commission made some suggestions. The Redevelopment Land Agency was invited to confer again with the Commission as the plan progresses. Exhibit H.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


L. R. Wilson, Secretary

13 October 1955

I. PROBLEM: At the meeting of 6 and 7 October, the members of the Commission of Fine Arts discussed the fiscal situation of the Commission in detail. The gist of their opinion was that the present budget did not permit:

- (a) The Secretary's office to accomplish the work required between meetings and keep up with the daily routine.
- (b) The hiring of technical assistance to make sketch plans and study models to assist the members in reaching decisions.
- (c) The Secretary's office to keep apace of the increased tempo in Fine Arts activities in Congress and the executive departments without long periods of overtime without pay.
- (d) The Government to realize maximum benefit from the use of the talents and capabilities of the members of the Commission, who donate their knowledge and time for travel expenses only.

It was the opinion of the members that some representation should be made to the Bureau of the Budget to authorize the small amount required to enable the Commission to function commensurate with its duties and the current work load.

II. DISCUSSION: The current operating budget of the Commission of Fine Arts is \$21,200.

The Commission of Fine Arts requested the Bureau of the Budget to approve an operating budget of \$31,000 for fiscal year 1957, an increase of \$9,800 over the amount allotted for fiscal year 1956.

The primary objective of the increase was to raise the grades of the three civil service positions currently occupied and to add an additional Grade 11, Assistant (Salary \$5,900).

The Bureau of the Budget approved an operating budget of \$26,200 for fiscal year 1957 plus \$1,000 for pay costs not absorbed in fiscal year 1956, making a total of \$27,200. This sum does not permit hiring the much-needed assistant.

The additional position is urgent, as well as the upgrading of existing positions. The Secretary's grade is not commensurate with the responsibility of the job nor is it comparatively equitable with similar positions in other agencies, such as the National Capital Planning Commission, the Redevelopment Land Agency, etc., which are over the \$10,000 level. The two lower grades, and especially the GS-3 are too low to attract the type of person that work in the Fine Arts field requires. There have been three changes in the last year in this position.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS: That the operating budget of the Commission of Fine Arts for fiscal year 1957 be maintained for the \$31,000 outlined in the preliminary estimate. This sum falls well below the limit of authorization for the Commission which was increased to \$35,000 during the last session of Congress.

11 October 1955

Dear Congressman Brown:

At a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts on 5 October 1955, the drawings of the carillon tower, which your committee has commissioned Mr. Douglas Orr to design to the memory of the late Senator Robert A. Taft, were presented by the architect for the consideration of the Commission of Fine Arts.

The Commission is glad to have the opportunity to express its opinion and highly commends the design for the memorial which, in its judgment, splendidly solves the requirements.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Clarence J. Brown, Chairman
Physical Memorial Subcommittee
Robert A. Taft Memorial Foundation
1401 New House Office Building
Washington 25, D. C.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT ASSOCIATION

THEODORE ROOSEVELT HOUSE • 28 EAST 20TH STREET, NEW YORK 3, N. Y.

Telephone: ALgonquin 4-1700

President

ALFRED S. STRAUSS II

Vice President

HERBERT CASWELL SMITH
LEONARD MARDEN ALBRIGHT



Treasurer

WILLIAM M. CHADBOURNE

Secretary and Director

HERMANN HAGEDORN

Bern bei Starnberg
Bavaria
September 23, 1955

Dear Mr. Finney,

My secretary has sent me a copy of your very interesting letter of September 14th, addressed to Mr. Robertson. I am happy to know that the District people recognize the value of agreement on basic issues among the various agencies involved before any definite plans are made. Having learnt something of the tribal customs of the District engineering office I was afraid they might make plans first and inquiries afterward. The questions which you raised are, on the contrary, that the District people want an expression of your judgment at the time when it will count most. This seems to me to augur well for the rapid development and execution of the waste project. I can assure you that this Association will want to act in the same spirit.

You will note that I am writing this in Bavaria. I expect to be back home early in October, prepared to run down to Washington for a get-together with you at any time that you indicate.

Sincerely,

Hermann Hagedorn
Hermann Hagedorn

Mr. David L. Finney
Fine Arts Committee
Washington, D. C.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

SEP 27 1955

NOTED

Exhibit C

September 14, 1955

Mr. J. M. Robertson
Director of Highways
Department of Highways
District Building
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Robertson:

The members of the Commission of Fine Arts were glad to meet with you and your assistants on September 7, 1955 and to have an opportunity to discuss the current developments in the plans for the projected Constitution Avenue-Theodore Roosevelt Island Bridge.

Progress in visualizing many problems of design that are involved in crossing the river at this point was evident in the plan presented by Mr. D. S. Brinkley. The nine questions with reference to designing the Constitution Avenue Bridge, which were presented for the Commission's consideration by Mr. S. I. Sawyer of your office, have been carefully considered by the members of the Commission who have asked me to reply to you as follows:

1. Is the network of roadways on the Washington approach acceptable to the Commission?

The position of the network of roadways on the Washington approach is not yet acceptable. The Commission believes there should be no encroachment of the bridge approaches on the Mall area south of Constitution Avenue.

2. Are the structures as indicated on the Washington approach acceptable as to location and desirability?

The structures as indicated on the Washington approach are consequently not acceptable as to location and desirability. The overhead crossing of Constitution Avenue at Third Street is especially undesirable.

3. Should the bridge deck be lower than the Memorial Bridge, or at the same elevation as the Memorial Bridge, or at a greater elevation than the Memorial Bridge?

The bridge deck should be as low as possible, particularly at the point where it crosses Theodore Roosevelt Island.

September 14, 1955

4. Will the Commission accept the construction of embankments on the Washington approach to the bridge in lieu of continuous structures spanning over the area?

Construction of embankments is acceptable in principle.

5. Will the Commission recommend a steel bridge on stone-faced walls, or a concrete bridge with steel-faced fascia beams, or will the Commission insist on construction of a masonry bridge?

The Commission does not prefer a masonry bridge, but would like to see studies of the above alternatives. The bridge structure should be as light as possible.

6. Is the general location of the bridge acceptable to the Commission?

The Commission believes that the location of the bridge is acceptable in general, but it is not yet ready to indicate approval in detail. The intersection on the Washington shore may have to be moved further north to accommodate the revised interchanges.

7. Is the Commission receptive to the idea of constructing retaining walls across Roosevelt Island which would retain a large fill which in turn would blend in with the existing topography of the island?

The Commission is receptive in principle to the idea of constructing retaining walls across the southern tip of Roosevelt Island as long as they blend with the existing topography of the island. The Commission understands that the Theodore Roosevelt Association desires provisions in the design to permit pedestrian and vehicular access to the island. The problem of entrance and exit as well as the number of cars that can be parked should be studied after consultation with the Theodore Roosevelt Island Association.

8. Is the Commission interested in the aesthetic treatment of the Virginia approach to the bridge?

The Commission is very much interested in the aesthetic treatment of the Virginia approach to the bridge; especially, in the

Mr. J. E. Robertson

September 14, 1955

views of the city from the Marine Memorial, and the views of the Marine Memorial from the bridge over the western channel of the river.

9. All the overpasses required in the District whether or not the overpasses on the Washington approach to the bridge should be of stone masonry or of steel construction.

The Commission recommends that the overpasses adjacent to the Hall on the Washington approach to the bridge be of masonry rather than steel.

The members of the Commission believe that the construction of a study model will facilitate studying an important development of most of the design problems raised and that more than steps may be taken to study the conditions by this method at an earlier opportunity.

For the Commission of the District of Columbia:

Respectfully yours,

WILLIAM H. HARRIS
Chairman

cc: Mr.

Architect-in-Chief, Department of the Interior
Chairman, National Capital Planning Commission
Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior
Director, War and Naval Memorial Commission

5 October 1955

Dear Mr. Hagedorn:

As you know, the Commission of Fine Arts did not meet during July and August, and in the press of business, official acknowledgement of the decision of the Theodore Roosevelt Association with reference to the proposed bridge has been too long delayed.

The Commission wishes to express to you its sincere appreciation for the Association's generous and far-sighted act in offering an island crossing of the Potomac River. Although plans are still indefinite, the Commission is insisting that all approaches to the proposed bridge on the District side lie north of Constitution Avenue; that a convenient drive and parking area be planned in connection with the bridge for visitors to the island; and that the approaches on the Virginia side do not interfere with the vista of the city from the Arlington Memorial area. We are also advising that the bridge be light in design and kept as low as possible, particularly at the point of crossing the Island.

It is the unanimous and whole-hearted opinion of the Commission of Fine Arts that the Theodore Roosevelt Association is facing changed times with courage and realism, and, at the same time, is keeping within the spirit of the memorial gift and the President whom it commemorates.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Mr. Herman Hagedorn, Director
Theodore Roosevelt Association
28 East 20th Street
New York 3, New York

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

RESOLUTION OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
ADOPTED AT ITS MEETING ON 5 OCTOBER 1955:

In view of its generous and far-sighted act in offering an island crossing of the Potomac River at the foot of Constitution Avenue, the members of the Commission of Fine Arts consider that a letter of appreciation is due the Theodore Roosevelt Association, and hereby recommend that the Secretary prepare such a letter for the Chairman's signature on behalf of the Commission.

5 October 1955

Dear General Lane:

Since last meeting with you, the members of the Commission of Fine Arts have studied the problems connected with the design of the Constitution Avenue crossing, and they have asked me to forward, for your consideration, some ideas for a new approach to the problem which will protect the Lincoln Memorial more from the Roosevelt Bridge traffic.

We suggest that the situation could be simplified by giving up the southerly connections between the Bridge and the Expressway. This omission would be feasible if the traffic from the central city were so channelized as to limit the west bound through-traffic in Constitution Avenue to cars intending to cross the river via the Roosevelt Bridge or the Memorial Bridge, or to those going north on the Expressway. The E Street-Expressway interchange, however, would have full connections with the Roosevelt Bridge and the Expressway.

This scheme is based on the supposition that very little traffic from the central city will want to turn south at the Potomac and, further, that Virginia traffic destined for points south of the Mall should use the Memorial Bridge.

As we visualize it, the construction resulting from this simplified program would be approximately as follows:

- (1) Constitution Avenue, just west of 23rd Street, would bear to the north, holding the present right of way, where the north-bound lane would swing to the north. The main flow (west and east traffic, divided only by a median strip) would swing to the west and rise to enter the bridge.
- (2) From the bridge two ramps would swing down to grade. The descending ramp, for east bound bridge traffic headed north, would loop around and pass under the bridge. At this point some traffic will enter the Rock Creek parkway, the rest will move north-east to enter the E Street-Expressway interchange. The northerly (ascending) ramp would carry west-bound traffic from the interchange to the bridge. (Note: The descending ramp might possibly swing under the Avenue as it approaches the bridge, if the location of the Expressway permits it.)

Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Lane

5 October 1955

In order to provide space for the descending loop to be constructed north of the northerly row of trees flanking Constitution Avenue, it will be necessary to move the bridge about three or four hundred feet farther north than the location shown in your present studies. We feel that such a change would be desirable for other reasons than the accommodation of the ramp mentioned above. These reasons are:

- (1) There is a greater distance from the Lincoln Memorial, Memorial Bridge, etc.
- (2) There is a better architectural relation to the granite exedra or overlook at the end of Constitution Avenue.
- (3) There is a better view of the bridge as seen in the Constitution Avenue vista. In the present plan the bridge crosses the Constitution axis at a very flat and slivering angle which would be weak and confusing in the views from the Avenue and from the bridge.
- (4) And, at the Island end, the bridge would occupy a more northerly location which would be desirable because it would reserve the possibility that some important screening foliage on South Island would be lost. The present plan touches the north end of South Island, where the land is highest and where high and wide-spreading tree growth can be expected.

The construction of the expressway would also be simplified by this program. Preferably it should be sunk, within the grounds of the Lincoln Memorial, so that the moving cars will not be seen. Since the present Constitution Avenue right-of-way would be preserved, at least as a park feature there would have to be a bridge of some kind at the place where the Expressway cuts through the Avenue.

We will be grateful if you will consider these suggestions. After you have reviewed them perhaps some of our members could meet with your engineers for a further exchange of views.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David H. Finley
Chairman

Brigadier General Thomas A. Lane
Engineer Commissioner of
the District of Columbia
520 District Building
Washington D. C.

*cc Chairman Natl Capital Planning Council
Director, Natl Park Service
Mr. H.T. Thompson, Nat. Capital Parks*

6 October 1955

Dear Mr. Mansure:

The members of the Commission of Fine Arts have noted with satisfaction the recent action the General Services Administration is taking in regard to removing some of the temporary war buildings that have so long marred certain monumental areas of the Nation's Capital. They hope your efforts will not cease until all the obtrusive structures which detract from the planned appearance of the city will have been demolished.

In this connection, the members of the Commission are concerned that the Great Plaza fronting Fourteenth Street in the Federal Triangle has been used for so long for a purpose other than that for which it was originally intended—a beautiful public plaza.

To this end they adopted the following resolution:

For almost twenty years now the Great Plaza adjacent to the Commerce, Labor, and Post Office Department Buildings has been as a blighted outdoor garage in the very heart of the Nation's Capital almost at the foot of the Washington Monument. Numerous proposals to landscape the area have been made but have not been carried out in spite of the support of two former Presidents of the United States. As an undeveloped area, the General Services Administration continues to lease the Great Plaza to a private concern for car-parking purposes. The members of the Commission of Fine Arts consider the use of such government park space as in the highest degree inappropriate and have today unanimously resolved to recommend to the General Services Administration that efforts be renewed to develop parking facilities elsewhere and carry out plans to reclaim the Great Plaza and to complete it in harmony with the Strauss Memorial Fountain and the architecture of the surrounding buildings.

Copies of this letter and resolution are being forwarded to the President, and to the National Capital Planning Commission, and the National Park Service, in the hope that we can complete the work, so often interrupted, of developing the Great Plaza as originally planned.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Mr. Edmund F. Mansure, Administrator
General Services Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

18 October 1955

Mr. Ralph O. Lundgren, Chairman
Memorial Committee
Second Division Association
2509 - 39th Street, N. W.
Washington 7, D. C.

Dear Mr. Lundgren:

The members of the Commission of Fine Arts were happy to meet with you and Mr. Israel Kaufman on 5 October 1955, and to discuss the plans you are formulating to commemorate the action of the Second Infantry Division in World War II and Korea, by means of an addition which will harmonize with the existing Second Division Monument on Constitution Avenue, Northwest.

The painting and the rough sketch that you presented were, of course, adequate only to indicate the general character of your design which the members of the Commission considered to have merit. They hope that you will be able to come to satisfactory agreement with Eggers and Higgins, the successors of John Russell Pope, the original architect of the monument, to assist you in developing your ideas further. When you are ready with more detailed plans, the Commission will be glad to meet with you again.

Sincerely yours,

L. R. Wilson
Secretary

25 October 1955

Colonel William E. Shepherd, Agent
Society of the First Division
1511 - 33rd Street, N. W.
Washington 7, D. C.

Dear Colonel Shepherd:

The members of the Commission of Fine Arts were happy to meet with you and Mr. Cass Gilbert, Jr. on 5 October 1955, and to discuss the plans you are formulating to commemorate the First Infantry Division's participation in World War II and in Korea by means of an appropriate addition to the existing First Division Monument on State Place, Northwest.

The Commission was grateful for the opportunity to see your proposal at an early stage. The members realized the difficulties involved in designing, within the funds available, an addition that will have the desired memorial significance and still preserve the monumentality and dignity of the existing monument. It is hoped that the ideas regarding structure and landscaping, which emerged during the discussion of developing the addition to the south of the old monument, will prove stimulating. When you have restudied the plans, I will be glad to arrange a time for you to present them again.

Sincerely yours

L. R. Wilson
Secretary

10 October 1955

Dear General North:

At a meeting on 6 October 1955, the Commission of Fine Arts approved the design of the proposed monument commemorating the action during World War I of the Fourth Marine Brigade in the Bois de Belleau, France. The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., USMC, requested early consideration of the design because of the Marine Corps' desire to complete and dedicate the monument on 18 November 1955. The design of the monument was presented by Mr. Felix de Weldon, the sculptor.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Brig. Gen. Thomas North, USA, Secretary
The American Battle Monuments Commission
2080 Main Navy Building
Washington 25, D. C.

25 October 1955

Mr. John R. Searles, Executive Director
Redevelopment Land Agency
499 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W.
Washington 1, D. C.

Dear Mr. Searles:

The members of the Commission of Fine Arts have asked me to extend, through you, to Mr. Iosh M. Pei and the other Webb and Knapp representatives, their appreciation for the explanation of the proposal for Project Area C. at the Commission's meeting on 5 October 1955. Redevelopment is a matter of the greatest interest to the Commission and of the utmost importance for the city of Washington. I hope that we can continue to hear about the progress of these plans.

Sincerely yours,

L. R. Wilson
Secretary

Minutes of
The Commission of
Washington, D. C.
6 October 1955

Index to Minutes of Meeting
6 October 1955

Executive Order for Commission, new draft	1
Fund for decoration of public buildings, legislation for	1
Georgetown, excessive subdivision of lots in	2
George Washington University, proposed redevelopment for	2
Lighting standards for the District, design for	2
National Collection of Fine Arts, legislation for site for building for	2
Shipstead Luce Act Submissions-Preliminary	
Ballantyne's Book Store, 605 15th Street	3
Q.S. Deigert & Yerkes Office Building	
35th Street and St. Mary's Place	3

